

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 15A

THE MIAMI HERALD
31 January 1985

Weinberger: Nicaragua a base for subversion

Around the Americas

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WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger sharply attacked Nicaragua Wednesday as a threat to U.S. interests and said the Central American country is "being mortgaged" to the Soviet Union.

Weinberger's statements and similar remarks Tuesday by Langhorne Motley, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, were seen as part of an administration campaign to get Congress to lift a ban on aid to anti-Sandinista rebels and promote the worthiness of their cause.

Two Democratic congressmen opposed to President Reagan's Central American policies also fired a salvo. New York Rep. Joseph Addabbo, chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on defense, and California's Rep. Norman Mineta urged Wein-

berger to suspend upcoming U.S. military exercises in Honduras.

The congressmen said the maneuvers scheduled next month could violate the aid ban because they could provide illegal, "back-door aid" to the rebels, known as contras. They also said that upgrading Honduran military bases last year may have violated a \$24 million spending ceiling on rebel aid in 1984. U.S.-built airfields in Honduras near the Nicaraguan border reportedly have been used in the past to assist the contras.

Weinberger, in a White House speech for the administration's weekly "Central America Outreach" program, said that "Nicaragua has become the clear focus of conflict in Central America and the base for subversion of other

countries in that region."

He said that at least 60 Soviet bloc ships have made military deliveries to Nicaragua since 1982, including 35 last year. The Sandinista armed forces, he added, have been greatly built up not only to crush the rebels but also to "intimidate their neighbors."

Nicaragua "is being transformed, as was Cuba, into an instrument for the obtainment of a much larger geopolitical end by a power external to our hemisphere," he said. "It is, in effect, being mortgaged to the Soviet Union and, more directly, to its protege, Cuba."

Much of the language Weinberger used came from a secret Pentagon-State Department study entitled *The Soviet-Cuban Connection*.

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His remarks concerning a Soviet listening post in Cuba to monitor U.S. communications appeared to come directly from the 23-page report, which lists the site as an electronic intelligence facility at Lourdes, near Havana.

"Lourdes is the most sophisticated Soviet collection facility outside the Soviet Union itself," according to the report, which was obtained by The Herald. "From this key listening post, the Soviets can monitor U.S. military and merchant shipping communications, as well as NASA space program activities at Cape Canaveral [and] eavesdrop on telephone conversations on the U.S. mainland."

Despite Weinberger's harsh words, another official involved in Central American affairs said the administration intends to resume talks with Nicaragua that were suspended two weeks ago.